

HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

OCTOBER 2014

SUMMARY



Amendments approved April 2017
Effective from February 2018

INTRODUCTION

This document summarises Basildon Councils Allocations Scheme which commenced 2014 and was revised in April 2017, amendments effective from February 2018.

Applicants and their advisors/support workers are encouraged to use the **Basildon Choice** website <http://www.basildonchoice.org.uk/> to find out more about the scheme, and consider which housing options will suit them best.

HOW TO APPLY FOR HOUSING

To apply for either a council or a social registered provider property (also known as a housing association), applicants must be accepted onto the council's Homeseeker register, however, not everyone will be accepted. Evidence of eligibility and qualification will be required to complete registrations.

To apply to go onto the register, applicants will be required to complete an online application form which includes a pre-assessment process. If the applicant appears to meet the qualification criterion, they will be able to continue to complete the more detailed Homeseekers application form.

When an applicant has passed the pre-assessment stage and completed the online Homeseeker application, they must complete and return a signed Consent and Declaration form in order for us to begin the application assessment. We will then contact them to provide evidence to support of the application. Any documentation required must be presented to the Council within the requested timescale or the application will be cancelled.

The applicant will then be notified to whether they have been accepted onto the Homeseeker Register, or will be given the reasons if they have not.

Where accepted, they will be informed of:

- The housing needs band in which their application has been placed
- The effective date in band
- The number of bedrooms that they are registered for and any other particular property requirements or restrictions e.g. floor level, bathing facilities etc

ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

Homeseeker applications are assessed in 2 stages:

Eligibility

Some categories of people are not eligible to join the Homeseeker Register because they are specifically excluded from doing so by rules set by the UK government.

Qualification

If the applicant meets the eligibility rules the council will then assess whether the applicant meets the following qualifying criteria to be included on the Homeseeker Register.

LOCAL RESIDENCE CONNECTION

Applicants must be able to prove they meet at least one of the following residence criteria below and that residence was by 'choice'

- Applicants are resident in Basildon Borough at the time of application and were resident for the past 7 years continuously
- Applicants accepted as statutory homeless by Basildon Council under s193 (2) Part VII of the Housing Act (1996), as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002) and Localism Act (2011).
- Current tenants with an assured, secure or flexible tenancy transferring from Basildon Council or Partner Registered Provider property in the Borough.
- Applicant can demonstrate that they need to move to the Borough in order to receive special care or support, and the nearest or most appropriate care or support that is available is in the Basildon Borough.
- Applicants currently placed outside of Basildon Borough (e.g. special residential education, hospital or prison) but would have passed the local residence test at the time they were placed outside the Borough
- Applicants currently residing in one of the supported schemes within the Borough (NACRO, Foyer, Dundee Court, Mind & Family Mosaic property scheme) and can provide documentation to show residency within the Borough continuously for one year at time of moving into the scheme

LOCAL RESIDENCE EXCEPTIONS

The following do **not** have to prove a resident connection to the Borough, but must still meet all other qualifying criteria to be accepted onto the Homeseeker Register.

- The applicant is currently serving in the regular forces, or has served in the regular forces within the last 5 years and was honourably discharged.
- Applicant has recently ceased (within last 6 months) or will cease (within the next 6 months) to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner where:
- The spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces and their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service
- Applicant is serving or has served in the reserve forces within the last 5 years and is suffering serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.
- Applicants aged 55 or over (any partners must be at least 50) who want to move into sheltered housing (including extra care schemes). Such applicants, who fail the local

residence connection, will be placed in Band E regardless of their housing needs and will only be registered for sheltered accommodation.

- Care leavers placed in Basildon by another authority that do not qualify for local residence, will be considered as having a local residence if they are resident in Basildon at time of application and were resident in care within the Borough for the last 7 years continuously. This is to recognise the applicant will already have built up a good support network through friends, schools etc.
- Care Leavers currently in local authority provided care and either residing in the Borough or outside at the time of nomination, must have resided in Basildon continuously for one year prior to going into care or continuously since birth if placed in care before their first birthday.
- Applicants who meet the Right to Move Criteria – see full scheme for details
- Any other person who, in the Council's view, would suffer unlawful and unjustified discrimination if required to prove a resident connection for e.g., refugees and travellers.
- Persons owed a 'reasonable preference' as defined below:
 - People who are homeless (within the meaning of part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)
 - People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192 (3)
 - People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
 - People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

Persons that are owed a 'reasonable preference' that **do not** meet all qualifying criteria including local connection will be awarded Band E only, regardless of their housing needs.

FINANCIAL LIMITS

Applicants who, in the opinion of the council, are deemed to be able to meet their own housing need through other housing options including the private rented sector will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register.

- Applicants will not normally qualify to join the register if they:
- Own or part-own a residential property, in Basildon or elsewhere
- Have savings over £16,000
- Have an annual income of £50,000 or over per annum.

- Income and Savings will not be taken into account for existing social tenants with secure/assured tenancies who have been accepted by the Council as transferring tenants however property ownership will be taken into account.
- Applicants aged 55 and over (any partners must be at least 50) who want to move into sheltered housing will qualify to join the register if any property they own (part own) and/or savings, are worth £250,000 or less.

Some exceptions apply - see the full scheme for details

HOUSING NEEDS BANDING

Basildon's Scheme is a banding scheme. Qualifying applicants are placed in one of five bands ranging from A (high) to E (low) which reflects their housing need and the Council's priorities for housing allocation.

Band A-D – if the applicant's circumstances meet more than one award criterion the application will be placed in the highest band applicable to their housing need.

Band E – Applicants who only qualify to Band E will not be awarded any higher banding criteria regardless of their circumstances.

Detailed definitions for each category are defined in the full scheme:

PRIORITY BANDING TABLE

Band A	
All Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional circumstances • National Witness Protection Scheme • MAPPA • Approved management transfers from outside the borough (Reciprocal Agreements – S16.4.8)
Transfer Tenants (Basildon Council/Registered Provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Transfers • Decants – in a home due for demolition or major repairs
Basildon Council Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible under the Transfer Plus Scheme • Standard Allocation Exceptions • Successions – required to move to a smaller property • Tenants in upper sheltered accommodation (no lift) with a medical need for ground floor and wish to remain in the same sheltered scheme
Band B	
All Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Level 1 award • Lacking two or more bedrooms • Homeless applicants in temporary accommodation provided by Basildon Council (12 months) • Homeless applicants accepted by Basildon council, in supported accommodation ready to move on

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in housing which is insanitary or in serious disrepair presenting an immediate or imminent threat to life or serious bodily injury
Transfer Tenants (Basildon Council/Registered Provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-occupancy – tenants downsizing to non-family size accommodation • Statutory overcrowding • In a home with specialist adaptations no longer needed • Held a secure/assured tenancy in Brooke House for more than 12 months – subject to criteria - See Appendix 6
Basildon Council Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non statutory Successions – subject to approval • Eligible for Transfer Plus Scheme (Refusal of first offer)
Band C	
All Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Level 2 award • In supported accommodation for single persons ready to move on • Approved Child leaving care nominations • Lacking one bedroom • Homeless applicants in temporary accommodation (6 months) • Living in housing which is insanitary or in serious disrepair not addressed within a reasonable timescale
Transfer Tenants (Basildon Council/Registered Provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underoccupancy – Tenants downsizing to family sized accommodation
Band D	
All Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardship/Welfare applicants accepted needing to receive care in Borough. • Homeless applicants in temporary accommodation less than 6 months • Homeless applicants in supported accommodation not ready to move on • Sharing kitchen or bathroom facilities with persons not considered as part of the housing application • Qualifying applicants moving to sheltered (including moving to another sheltered scheme) • Non priority homeless/other homelessness/under notice • Applicants who meet the armed forces criteria and will cease (within a 6 month period) to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation • Approved under the Right to Move – appendix 3
Band E	
All Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered housing with 7 years local residence but fail the financial limits test • Sheltered housing who fail the 7 years local residence • Extra care housing in Basildon

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In supported housing, including Child in Care nominations not ready to move on into independent living accommodation • Applicants owed a reasonable preference who do not otherwise fall within the qualification criteria (Bands A-D)
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BEDROOM ENTITLEMENT TABLE

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER	BEDROOM ENTITLEMENT
Any adult couple	1 bedroom
Person aged over 16 years	1 bedroom
Any two children under 16 years – same sex	1 bedroom
Any two children under 10 years – regardless of sex	1 bedroom
Any other child	1 bedroom
Provisions for additional bedroom	
Accepted by Council’s Medical Advisor as needing their own bedroom	1 additional bedroom
A carer who provides permanent 24 our ‘live in’ care – confirmation is required from social services (see section 3.2.6)	1 additional bedroom
Specific provision as detailed in the downsizing scheme	1 additional bedroom (approval by head of housing)
Specific provisions for permanent decant tenants due to demolition of their home	1 additional bedroom

There may be occasional exceptions to the above guidelines, see full scheme for details.

EFFECTIVE DATE IN BAND

All applicants accepted onto the Homeseeker register will be awarded an effective date dependent on their application type and they meet the criteria for additional priority.

- **General Needs and Sheltered Application**
Date the housing application was received for assessment unless backdated priority applies
- **Homeless applicants accepted under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 including those placed in short term supported housing**
The date the formal homeless application was made to Basildon Council
- **Applicants in short term supported housing**
The date the applicant moved into the scheme
- **Child leaving care nominations**

The effective date will be the date the housing application was received. When the applicant is accepted as ready to move-on, the effective date will change to the date of their 18th birthday

- **Permanent Decants**

The date the current tenancy commenced will be used as the effective date for tenants who are required to move due to their current home being demolished

BAND CHANGE DUE TO CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES

Moving up into a higher band – the effective date will be the date the application is eligible for the higher band

Moving down to a lower band – the effective date will be the original application date

BACKDATE AWARDS

In addition, the following 1 year effective date backdate awards may also apply if applicants meet specific backdate award criteria:

- **Sheltered**
- **Working Household**
- **Born in Basildon**
- **Community contribution**

A maximum of one year backdate applies regardless of whether the applicant meets more than one of the above criteria.

In addition applicants who qualify for an **Armed Forces backdate** may have their effective date backdated by length of service applies in addition to any award above.

See full scheme for specific eligibility details of all award criteria.

Additional effective band date priority does not apply to applicants who are residing in temporary accommodation provided by Basildon Council or applicants residing in supported accommodation entitled to a move on nomination.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Applicants must inform the Council of any change of circumstances that may affect their Homeseeker register application by updating their application form.

BASILDON CHOICE – OUR CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

Basildon Council operates a choice based lettings scheme covering the areas below and is committed to advertising as many vacant properties as possible through the Basildon Choice system.

Central:	Fryerns & Craylands	Ghyllgrove	Lee Chapel North	Lee Chapel South
Laindon:	Laindon West	Noak Bridge	Laindon & Five Links	Langdon Hills
Pitsea:	Felmores	Chalvedon	Pitsea	Northlands/Trenham
Vange:	Barstable	Kingswood	Vange Nth & Central	Vange South
Wickford:	No sub areas			
Billericay:	No sub areas			

Properties will be advertised on a weekly basis opening at 12.01 am on every Friday morning and closing at 11.59pm on every Monday evening on the Basildon Choice Website www.basildonchoice.org.uk

Applicants accepted onto the Homeseeker Register whose application is 'Active' can bid on up to 3 properties each week property.

Potentially vulnerable applicants can be assisted with bidding if required - see full scheme for information.

The council is committed to advertising as many vacant properties as possible through the Basildon Choice system, however in some circumstances it is necessary to offer properties directly to an applicant without being advertised through the bidding process. Applicants registered for direct offers will be notified in their assessment letter that they will not be able to place bids through Basildon Choice.

RIGHT TO REVIEW

Applicants have a right to request a review of Homeseeker decisions. Review requests, along with any supporting information, must be made in writing to the Review Officer, Housing Choice department, within 21 days of the decision. The applicant may enlist the support of an advocate or advice agency to assist with a review. The reviewing officer will notify the applicant of the outcome within 56 days of receipt of the request in writing and will give clear grounds for the decision

Please refer to the Housing Allocation Scheme document for more detailed clarification of any topics contained within this Summary.

A full copy is available on the Basildon Choice website.